

Soviet Enslaves Labor, Aims to Dupe Concessionaires

Movement to Crush Trade Unions Comes as Latest Act to Return Russian Workers to State of Serfdom--Lenine Eager to Grant Huge Concessions With View of Luring Foreign Capitalists Into Making Common Cause With Bolsheviki--Red Chiefs Fear Their Own Armies--Unrest Grows With Massing of Troops on Lettish, Lithuanian and Polish Frontiers Despite Lenine's Peace Talk

READERS OF THE NEW YORK HERALD will recall the interesting series of articles analyzing conditions in Russia by Capt. Francis McCullagh, which THE HERALD published a few months ago. Capt. McCullagh is again on the Russian border on behalf of the readers of this newspaper. The article which follows throws important light on conditions in Moscow and it gives an interesting picture of affairs on the border as well.

Special correspondence to THE NEW YORK HERALD.
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By CAPT. FRANCIS MCCULLAGH.
RIGA, January 2.

INFORMATION that has just reached me from trustworthy sources in Moscow tells of a movement under way by the Soviet Government to crush the trade unions in Russia and also throws a flood of light on the Bolshevik policy in the matter granting foreign concessions such as would be embraced in the enterprise broached by Washington D. Vanderlip. In the minds of those well versed in the situation the aim of Lenine and Trotsky in giving concessions to foreign capitalists would be ultimately to make the concessionaires tools of the Soviet.

The All-Russia Central Council of Professional Unions has announced the dissolution in two weeks time of all the political departments known as the *Politburets*, of these unions. These political departments, which carried out political propaganda and political surveillance, were of particular importance, and their suppression is thought to be due to a movement which recently arose among the transport workers and from which the Soviet Government judged that it had something to fear.

The Provincial Soviets have decreed the dissolution, first of all, of the political departments of the railway workers' unions; and the members of the transport workers' unions have been given three days in which to present their answer to the central bodies in close connection with this and with the



PRESIDENT, WORKMEN'S COMMITTEE.

Soviet Congress now sitting in Moscow as well as with the severe criticism of the National Commissars in which the Bukharin group has recently permitted itself to indulge are the arrests of prominent Communist leaders which have recently been made in Moscow and Petrograd. The leaders have all been noted for their opposition to the present policy of the Soviet Government.

Tenth Communist Congress To Meet in Moscow Next Month

The Tenth Congress of the Communist party will meet at Moscow in the beginning of February. Its programme will be as follows:

1. The question of the professional organizations or trade unions and their role in economic life.
2. The Soviet Republic and its relations to capitalist Governments.
3. Organization of commerce.
4. Democratization of workmen.
5. The question of nationality.
6. The question of national teaching.
7. Speeches of the representatives of the Communist party at the International of Professional Unions.

Speaking of this programme the *Pravda* says: "The question of nationality, i. e., of the policy which should be followed in different parts of the Federated Soviet Republic, figures first on the programme of the Congress."

Speaking of the situation in Russia, Mr. Besmans, the Latvian Minister to the Soviet Republic, who has just arrived in Riga from Moscow, says that Lenine's speech at the All-Russia Congress of Soviets, now sitting in the Russian capital, deserves special attention. Speaking of internal policy, Lenine emphasized the fact that "Russia needs more engineers and less politics," and this remark was very loudly applauded.

"In Latvia and abroad," said Mr. Besmans, "the present trend of events in Russia is not correctly appreciated. The outside observer divides the population of Russia into two classes, the right and the left, but it would be a mistake to think that the right are all Monarchists and the left ex-

treme Socialists. As a matter of fact, the left protest for the most part against the personal regime which prevails and are striving for a collegiate form of government. But the victory of the left wing would not threaten the existence of the present state of things in Soviet Russia, for that wing is not attempting to cause a fresh revolution but rather to build up the internal life of Russia.

"Lenine dwelt in his speech on the sub-

section it is shortly to issue a book wherein details of all available concessions are given.

The whole picture of stupendous untouched resources which this book presents is of course very striking, but all the data are taken from reports drawn up in the time of the Czars, and the great question of whether under the present Government in Russia any of these concessions could be worked profitably by foreigners is not treated of at all.

ply does as it is told. There are labor armies all over the country under military discipline and living in what is practically a state of servitude. Lenine, the apostle of liberty for the worker, has brought back that serfdom which one of the autocrats abolished. He found Russia a Slav State and he has made it a slave State. We had an instance of it here in Latvia the other day when some hundreds of Russian prisoners of war returned to Russia from Germany, where

"The Russian Army of To-day" is the title of a set of sketches made by Capt. Sibinsky, a Russian flying officer, who served with the Reds but who flew to Riga and stayed there. Several characteristic Bolshevik types are presented here.



A RED COSSACK.



SOLDIER OF THE THIRTEENTH REGIMENT.



THE RED SAILOR.

To give a few details of the concessions which, according to the Bolsheviki, are now available: There are seventy million dessiatina of forest between the Irtysh and the Obi in western Siberia (one dessiatina—2.70 acres).

In northern Russia there are eighteen million dessiatina of agricultural land and eighty-five million dessiatina of timber.

In Siberia Lenine is offering to foreign capitalists the very rich Kuznetsky basin, which is estimated to contain 150,000 milliard poof of coal, being half of the entire coal supply of Russia. (One poof equals 36.11 pounds avoirdupois.)

Eighty versts south of the town of Kuznetsky (so continues Lenine's book), is the Tolbesk iron ore. If this region were connected with the Kuznetsk station by a railway an iron factory could easily turn out from forty to fifty million poof of cast iron a year.

At a distance of one hundred versts from the Irtysh is the Ekibas coal mine with thirty-five milliard poof of coal. This property already belongs to an English company, however, the Irtysh Trading Corporation of London, if I mistake not. A year ago all the English employees of that company fled before the Red army, and one of them who was captured was not allowed to return to Ekibas. And even if he had returned he could have done his employers no good service, for all labor in the Ekibas mines had become demoralized.

In southeastern Russia there will be concessions with an area of 3,077,123 dessiatina of land open to foreign concessionaires who wish to engage in agriculture and the raising of cattle. They must work with the most up-to-date machinery, and the question of transporting their agricultural produce abroad will be arranged by mutual agreement.

Russian Newspaper Comments On the Vanderlip Concession

Speaking of the Vanderlip concession in Kamchatka, the *Pravda* says:

"The question of concessions ought to be considered from the standpoint of the energetic struggle between socialism and capitalism. The economic condition of the country is catastrophic. To reestablish trade and commerce in the republic with its own strength and while the fight was at its bitterest would have been difficult. It would be difficult even now, and it is absolutely necessary that we have a breathing space during which we can make use for a time of all-embracing capital. In this way we shall strengthen ourselves for the conflict."

"At the present moment Kamchatka is quite outside the sphere of our influence and has for us no value whatsoever. No matter how strong may be our desire to do so we are physically incapable of making the slightest exertion for the exploitation of Kamchatka's natural resources."

I asked an extremely well informed Lettish official what he thought of the present intensive propaganda of the Bolsheviki on the subject of concessions, and if he believed that Lenine could possibly guarantee any profits at all to foreign capitalists. My Lettish friend said that nearly 90 per cent. of the propaganda was insincere and untrue, but that, nevertheless, it was possible for Lenine to make the Russian muzhik act as a slave to the foreign concessionaire.

"At present," he said, "Russian labor sim-

some of them had been six years in concentration camps. On crossing the Russian frontier from Latvia they all asked for permission to go home, at least for a few days but that request was in every case refused. They were all made to join a labor battalion and were sent at once to Archangel.

"It is not impossible, therefore, that we may see Russia parcelled out among a gang of foreign capitalists, with the Russian people reduced to a condition of absolute servitude and the half million or so of Bolsheviki forming a sort of feudal aristocracy all over the country. Stranger things have happened."

Red Chiefs, Afraid of Own Armies, Would Grasp Excuse to Disarm Them

The same authority went on to explain to me that the Bolsheviki are really anxious for foreign capitalists to come in so that they can turn part of the Red army into a labor army to work for those concessionaires. The Red chiefs are really afraid of their own army, hence they are keeping it at present on the frontier, as far from Moscow as possible, but in places where it will be better fed than it will be in the capital. If, say, an English capitalist takes a great forest concession on the northern coast of European Russia Trotsky will only be too delighted at this opportunity of disarming a battalion of his Red army and sending them to work for a foreigner who will feed and clothe them and in this way keep them quiet.

And Trotsky seems to have no fear that such a foreigner will ever turn out to be a reactionary. Between the cosmopolitan Bolshevik and a certain type of cosmopolitan capitalist there is at present much in common; and in future these two may also have in common a strong aversion to seeing the Czar back or to allowing any kind of parliamentary government to be established in Russia.

My Lettish friend threw out these latter suggestions for what they were worth, but was quite sure that the key to the Bolshevik policy of the last year is to be found in Lenine's desire to keep the Red army always employed and fed. A year ago it was thrown at Siberia, then it was hurled at the Poles, then it was sent to the Caucasus. The chance now offers of getting foreign concessionaires to feed, clothe and employ this Frankenstein, and at the same time to open up, out of a healthy regard for their own pockets, the overthrow of the Soviet Government. Once they get foreign capital interested in Russia Lenine and Trotsky will feel that they are safe.

Bolsheviki Expect to Make Common Cause With Plunderers

The Czars never permitted anybody to plunder Russia save themselves; the Bolsheviki, on the contrary, propose to throw open the whole country to plunderers in the expectation, which is not an unreasonable one, that these plunderers will make common cause with them. Thus the Communists, who hated the capitalists above all things and regarded priests and kings as mere tools of capital, are now about to shake hands with this deadly enemy over the bound and helpless body of Russian labor.

The Soviet Congress now sitting under the Presidency of Lenine at Moscow is making a desperate effort to prove that Bolshevism is profoundly peaceful and principally inter-



LATVIA'S PRIME MINISTER.



TROTSKY.

ested in giving away valuable concessions to foreigners.

On December 27 Comrade Milyutin held forth for a long time to the foreign correspondents on the subject of concessions. He says he wants produce to be sent abroad, not in the raw, but in the half finished state. This will entail the erection of many mills and factories where work will be given to Russians, but he offers no guarantee that these factories will not be seized by the workmen as soon as foreign capitalists have sunk some scores of thousands of pounds in them.

"The classic concession," said Milyutin, "is that of Kamchatka, which has been made over to Vanderlip. In such concessions as that both sides stand to gain. Soviet Russia gives the concession in the hope that, as a result of it, closer commercial relations will be established with Europe which, without our raw material and our food products, can never hope to surmount the colossal economic difficulties which lie in its path."

Apropos of this, I learn from a Russian recently arrived here from Archangel, that if any English firm intends to buy wood or hides in northern Russia they must bring with them not only their own ships but also their own labor for getting the goods aboard as the Russian laboring population ashore are literally too weak to load a vessel. It is quite unthinkable, however, that the Archangel Soviet would allow foreigners to act as dockyard employees in the manner seriously suggested to me.

This concern for Europe ran through all the speeches made at this discussion; every speaker turned a moist eye towards England, France and Italy waiting for raw material from Russia.

"We give definite guarantees to the capitalist of the West," said Milyutin, "and these guarantees we shall stand by strictly and accurately. But at the same time we would ask those who take concessions from us to be perfectly loyal in their relations with us and to be faithful to their obligations."

The Bolsheviki are displaying great diplomatic skill in getting the capitalists to compete with one another by telling the French that the English are getting hold of all the big concessions and by whispering to the English that the Americans are collaring everything.

I had an opportunity of ascertaining the Bolshevik point of view on the condition of affairs in Latvia. It is a curious point of view, but as it may serve to foretell what is going to happen I shall give it.

The Bolsheviki are morbidly afraid of further intervention accompanied by a stricter blockade than ever. On this point they speak like insane people suffering from a mania of persecution. They have massed troops on the Rumanian frontier because they fear that possibly Wrangel may come in that way, and they are indescribably nervous about Vilna because they dread that Zeligovsky, together with sundry White soldiers who have, they say, drifted thither, as well as with foreign troops sent to keep order during the plebiscite, may attack Russia. They assert that peace is absolutely necessary for them, but that the Poles are deliberately creating a feeling of unrest.

I asked if Gen. Radzish, who recently published an alarmist article about the Reds on the Latvian frontier, was a Pole, and they replied that, though he was a Lett, he was under Polish influence. This Lettish General had presupposed that some of the Red Letts in the Bolshevik army on the Livonian frontier took it into their heads to invade Lettland and, curiously enough, some Red Letts did cross the frontier the next day, December 24, and plunder several villages. The Bolsheviki state that their number was forty, but the report in Riga is that it was 4,000. Nothing has been published on this subject in Lettland and the whole affair is being kept very quiet.

The Poles also complain that Red soldiers crossed the Polish frontier and plundered Polish villages, but this the Reds deny. They say that possibly some robber bands, hard pressed by the Soviet forces, may have gone into Poland. However that may be, a feeling of unrest certainly does exist even here in Latvia, where there is no reason for it, and in order to dissipate it, the Latvian Foreign Minister has just given to the official telegraph agency a rather too optimistic survey of the situation, in which he denies that the Soviet troops are concentrated in any considerable numbers on the Lettish, Lithuanian or Polish frontiers.

Stirring Up Unrest in One Place While Allaying It in Another

A curious feature of the general unrest is that while the Red representatives are stirring it up in one place they are allaying it in another. In Kovno the Russian newspaper *Echo*, which is the mouthpiece of Axelrode, the local Bolshevik Minister, is constantly filled with alarmist reports about Red concentrations on every Western frontier, from Rumania to Finland, and the Poles, on the other hand, make light of all this. In Latvia the Poles and the French are accused of spreading alarmist rumors while the Bolsheviki are posing as injured innocents whose sole desire is peace. The explanation probably is that all this part of the world is more or less in a state of chaos, and that the Bolshevik "diplomats" in particular have no fixed policy.

In his opening address before the All-Russian Soviet Congress in Moscow Lenine spoke as follows:

"As we shall soon have signed peace with the Poles we must now turn our attention to reconstructive work inside Russia. All the adjoining States now understand that our love of peace is by no means an indication of weakness. They must be now convinced that no matter how strenuously we work for peace we are always ready also for war."

"The strength of the Red army ought, in my opinion, to be increased. You all know that, under the influence of Western capitalists, the Polish landlords and capitalists declared war on us. At the present moment that war is terminating in a peace of which the conditions are more favorable to us than are the conditions we offered to Poland before the war. The preliminary of peace with Poland are already signed, and thus the Entente's policy of military intervention breaks down again. The number of States which have concluded peace with us has increased and it may safely be prophesied that in the very near future we shall have signed a final peace with Poland."

"We have now concluded peace with all the countries on our west frontier, and in accordance with the friendly principles of our policy we have acknowledged the independence of these States. Our relations with the Lettish Government were almost disturbed again, but the misunderstanding is now removed and it is my hope that we shall be able in the near future to enter into economic relations with Lettland."

Nothing was said in the official despatches of the vigorous struggle that has been going on for some time between Trotsky and Milyutin on one side and Larin and Rykov on the other, a struggle which has now ended in the victory of Trotsky, who, as I have already announced, will probably leave the War Office and become a sort of economic dictator.